



Feature Article

The Beauty of Reciprocal Appreciation

Amy Chui

While most of 105 Gibson's programs run year-round, the Tax Clinic opens only from March to April – the shortest of any programs at the Centre. Yet, its history is longer than the Centre itself.

It began when 12 volunteers from the Toronto Christian Community Church's English congregation spearheaded the tax clinic in 2008. At that time, it opened for five weeks serving 150 clients, most of whom Chinese. As 105 Gibson Centre opened in 2013, the Tax Clinic was registered with Canada Revenue Agency as an official location for its Community Volunteer Income Tax Program and it was open for eight weeks. By 2017, 40 volunteers are helping over 450 ethnically diverse clients with tax preparation, reception or making appointments. Many volunteers had benefited, whether it was fostering new friendships or building self-confidence or learning a new skill

Amy has been faithfully serving since the beginning. She finds joy from seeing the clients being helped and are thankful for the services. Their encouragement, in turn, becomes her motivation to serve. This reciprocal appreciation exists between the clients and volunteers, and there is no clear indication which party is benefitting more. This is the Centre's beauty, where the users and volunteers both play the role of the "helped" and the "helper" in their own ways.

Today, after serving many years together with her husband, Amy is ready to mentor a group of younger volunteers to ensure services to the community continues. Looking ahead, it is the tax clinic committee's wish to serve more people either by extending the hours into weekdays or by recruiting more volunteers for the weekends. In either case, their mission remains the same: to serve the community and those in need. -- Written by 105 Gibson Reporter



105 Gibson Ministry : Community Needs

proactively responds to the various needs in the community through our Food Bank, Thrift Store, Free Tax Clinic and Out of the Cold.

Receiving and Offering Support

Lily

Lily volunteers at the Tax Clinic and she shares her story from receiving help to offering help. She came to Canada in 2010 and had few friends here. She encountered difficulties in coping with the new environment and studies, thus her depression worsened and she required medication and counselling. Her life turned around when she became a Christian and started to attend Toronto Christian Community Church regularly. She participated in various activities and also applied to use the free tax services at TCCC where she met the coordinator Amy. The following year, Amy invited Lily to volunteer as well. She was hesitant, but with Amy's encouragement, she volunteered as a receptionist and greeted many people. As clients waited for their appointments or for their tax returns to be filed, she would use that opportunity to practice her English and communication skills. Her confidence increased overtime. Although the clients visit only once a year, they remembered the kind hospitality, and they would welcome each other warmly when they meet again. The valuable friendships she has built with the clients give her great incentive to continue volunteering. She had previously benefitted from the Tax Clinic, and she now

eagerly wishes to reciprocate her support to the clients.

To Lily, volunteering is very rewarding as she received many rewards including building her self-confidence and reaching her potential. Most importantly, she learned that she can contribute to the community.

Although Lily lives far from the Centre, she is happy and never hesitates to support the clinic during each tax season. She has been volunteering for five years, and it is her wish to continue serving the community here. -- Written by 105 Gibson Reporter



MY experience with 105 Gibson

An Unexpected Gift from Heaven

Nora Yeung

Our Thrift Store has been serving the community since 2015 with a primary objective of serving those in need. Previously a volunteer gave a set of bed linen and pillowcase to a missionary as a gift. This small kind gesture brought tremendous joy as they replaced the old set while giving thanks to God. They even wrote an appreciation card and to bless the works done by the Thrift Store.

Our second objective is to sell high-quality second-hand or brand new items at a reasonable price with the proceeds supporting the Centre's programs and services. We worried about last September's fall sales but miraculously a couple came to inquire about donating jewelry. Their jewelry business had closed down and they generously donated their collection of brand new and uniquely designed jewelry and handbags to us. Furthermore, they also donated display shelves from their store, which we will greatly need in the future. Not only did this donation satisfied our immediate needs for the fall sales, it also prepared us for the future. Clearly, God once again provided and worked miracles beyond our expectations.

With a permanent location in the Centre, we can open year-round to help those in need. We are also partnering with other mainstream and Chinese organizations that specialize in serving adults with developmental needs in providing a retail space for them to develop life and job skills. In the future, we hope to provide retail experience to new immigrants or those who seek opportunities in the retail industry. --Written by 105 Gibson Reporter



We are both the Donor and Beneficiary

Thrift Store Donor

My wife and I ended our jewelry business and planned to return to Hong Kong. We contacted multiple organizations hoping they would accept our shelves and jewelry as donations. We waited for a long time for them to return our calls as we had nowhere to bring the jewelry. Time was becoming tight for us. We became anxious to a point where we argued about where to donate the jewelry that was in the car. We decided to ask 105 Gibson if they would receive our jewelry too. To our delight, they acknowledged their quality and gladly welcomed them into the Thrift Store. This was an affirmation that our jewelry was worthy for sale and our business was not a failure even though we had to close it. More importantly, this eliminated the stress of finding a new home for them before our departure. While for 105 Gibson, we are donors who contributed to and supported the Thrift Store. But for us, we are the ones being helped, the beneficiary of their acceptance and embrace.

We named our business Rejoice, hoping to share Jesus' joy with our customers because of God's love for us. We are also reminded by a sign at our church's parking lot exit that says

"You are now entering the mission field. Serve Him well." We are thankful that our jewelry can fulfill the same purpose beyond our business in bringing joy to others through the Thrift Store. May God's name be praised! --
Written by 105 Gibson Reporter



Call for Volunteers!

The Thrift Store needs volunteer to assist with the following tasks. Please contact volunteer@105gibson.com if you are able to help.

- Welcome and greet customers
- Manage check out points
- Check inventory and stock shelves



105 Gibson in Action

This year's first **Cultural Café concert** on Feb 9 was a success! It felt like a night in Hong Kong as the night exuded an unrushed sing-along feeling with songs from Chinese and western cultures. The Cultural Café served their famous Hong Kong milk tea, refreshment and a Japanese dessert. From the food to music, it was an exchange of multiple cultures in one event, which is the purpose of 105 Gibson's Cultural Café ministry.



The Power of Now

Rev. Jonathan Chan
General Director,
105 Gibson Centre



105 Gibson underwent Phase 2 construction over the last six months and had passed the inspection from City of Markham in February. We look forward to officially unveiling the new spaces at the Grand Opening on March 25. What are some of the Centre's unique characteristics that have drawn countless visitors through its doors in the past four years and calling it their second home?

First, the Centre offers diversified and comprehensive services under one roof. Our Abundant Life Program members can shop at the Thrift Store after classes; the youth can join their peers for a free dinner after playing basketball; our Food Bank users can also be our Tax Clinic clients.

Second, we also build a mutual peer support network. Whether they are our users, instructors, volunteers or staff, they cultivate a reciprocal rapport where all receive care and companionship that develop into a healthy and whole life.

Lastly, many users tell me that the Centre has a home-like, friendly and hospitable atmosphere. Some even visit multiple times each week. In fact, many have already called the Centre their second home.

From being a part of the community for the past four years to being their second home now, we have witnessed the joy experienced by our users. This is the first step in changing lives that leads to changing the community. We anticipate what the future holds for us as we walk with you. May you find your second home here.

Upcoming Events

Abundant Life Program Health Talk

"Introduction to Heart Failure" will take place on Saturday March 10. Speaker is Dr. Chi-Ming Chow. Cantonese talk from 10 – 11:15 am and Mandarin talk from 11:45 am to 1 pm. Free blood pressure measurement available.

Phase 2 Grand Opening

will take place on Sunday March 25 from 12:30 to 2:30 pm. Come discover the "new" 105 Gibson Centre, explore our stories and connect with the community. Refreshments will be served.

The **Thrift Store** will open on the following dates:

Mar 25 (Sun) from 2 – 4 pm;
Mar 28 to Apr 25 (Wed) from 12 – 4 pm;
Apr 1 to 29 (Sun) from 11 am – 3 pm.

Cultural Café Concert will take place on Friday April 13 from 7:30 to 9:30 pm with a new format. Sharing more than songs, there will be sharing of life stories as well. Refreshments from the café will be served.

105 Gibson Centre FREE Tax Clinic

From March 3 to April 29, a group of trained volunteers will provide free tax return services for individuals and families who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Individual income less than \$30,000
- Family income less than \$40,000
- No business or rental income
- No investment income
- Foreign properties less than \$100,000

By APPOINTMENT only

Every Saturday and Sunday, March 3 to April 29, 2018
Saturday: 9:30 am to 12:30 pm
Sunday: 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm
English, Cantonese and Mandarin services available.

Please leave a message at 905-946-8787 ext #168 or email 105gibson.taxclinic@gmail.com if you meet the above criteria to book an appointment.



Supporting 105 Gibson

We welcome you to join our efforts in blessing the community through partnership, donations, and volunteering. Visit our website for more information.